

HEPPNER



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Boardman Kiwanis and county MDT join together to make blankets for children

Two Morrow County groups recently banded together in a holiday project to keep at-risk children warm.

On Dec. 9 and 10, members of the Boardman Kiwanis and the Morrow County Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) worked together to make 16 blankets for children involved with the Department of Human Services (DHS). The blankets will be donated to DHS so they can be given to children who have been taken into DHS care.

"During one of our monthly Morrow County MDT meetings we discussed how many of the children in DHS care enjoyed the blankets that have been made for them," said Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson. "We wanted to make sure that DHS had an adequate supply of blankets to provide to children in their care, so we contacted the Boardman Kiwanis to see if they could assist us in providing blankets."

"The Boardman Kiwanis group has a long history of public service to Morrow County," Nelson continued. "As a joint venture we were able to



Pictured are (L-R): Margie Hollandsworth, Justin Nelson and Mickie Ebert working on blankets at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Boardman on Dec. 9. —Contributed photo

make a total of 16 blankets over a two night period."

Others involved in the project, Nelson said, were Mickie Ebert, Deona Siex, Jim and Margie Hollandsworth, Karen Dike, Carolyn Carter, Cindy Isham, Cheryl Taylor, Miranda Taylor and Jane Pope.

"Because of this hard work, there will be a continued supply of blankets," Nelson concluded.

The Morrow County Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) is responsible for reviewing both physical and sexual child abuse cases, as well as neglect cases in Morrow County. It is part of a multi-disciplinary team comprised of

representatives from law enforcement, public schools, ESD, hospitals, Domestic Violence Services, courts, health departments, and the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS).

The MDT members work in collaboration to address the needs of children and their families in Morrow County and to facilitate a process in which professionals from diverse disciplines are able to work more effectively and efficiently.

Anyone interested in learning more about or joining the Boardman Kiwanis is urged to contact Mindy Binder at 541-571-0817 or kmbinder@msn.com.

County to build new administrative offices

Health, accounting and juvenile to have new home next to courthouse



An aerial site plan of the courthouse and the proposed new administrative offices. —Contributed photo

By David Sykes

In a major move to consolidate county offices and services in one location, Morrow County has announced a plan to purchase three homes next to the courthouse in Heppner, tear them down and build a brand-new, 10,000-square-foot, \$1.75 million office complex.

Expected to move into the new offices are health, juvenile and other offices from the Gilliam Bisbee building, and accounting and other services from the annex on Rock Street. There will also be two conference rooms that will be available for public use. County Judge Terry Tallman says the entire project will be funded with money collected from county wind projects, and will not raise county property taxes.

"Through planning sessions with accounting, the commissioners determined that the new administrative building could be built and fully

funded through wind energy projects funds; this project will not result in any increase in taxes," Tallman told the Gazette-Times.

Formal announcement of the project was expected to be made at county court meeting Wednesday, Dec. 18. Tallman said deals have been struck to purchase the three residences to the north of the courthouse. Those structures will be torn down and the facility will be built on that property. Lead contractor for the project will be the Pendleton-based Wenaha Group.

Wenaha Group provides construction management and consulting services to organizations, corporations, and tribes throughout the region, and is a certified Indian-owned business. Tallman said the company has committed to use as much local labor as possible for the construction, including sub contracting when possible. The local Intermountain Educational Service District will also

be involved, overseeing the tear down of the homes and construction of the new building.

There are still details to be completed, Tallman stressed. The City of Heppner planning department will need to issue a conditional use permit since the property is zoned residential, and purchase of the three homes should be closed by the end of the year. Construction of the facility is expected to take about 14 months, Tallman said.

Tallman stressed that funding of the new offices will come from the Strategic Investment Program, or SIP agreement, an in-lieu-of-taxes agreement between the county and the Shepherds Flat Wind Farm, which brings in \$1 million to the county per year for the next 15 years.

"This is a very good thing for the county, and for South County," Tallman

—See NEW COUNTY OFFICES/PAGE TWO

Other taxing districts ask CREZ to split the money

By David Sykes

A representative of four Morrow County taxing districts presented a proposal at Monday's Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) meeting, asking that other county taxing districts not represented on the CREZ board receive 50 percent of the future fees collected by the CREZ.

Larry Mills, Chairman of the MC Health District board of directors, was making the request on

behalf of the MC Unified Recreation District, MCHD, North Morrow Vector Control and the Oregon Trial Library District.

Mills presented a schedule of proposed taxes and said that 50 percent of the funding after meeting ongoing expenses and prior commitments of the CREZ should be distributed to 11 other districts in the county. The schedule did not include any money to Morrow County, the City of Boardman or the Port of

Morrow because the group felt these entities have the opportunity for the other 50 percent of the CREZ funds.

The CREZ board is made up of six representatives, two each from the Port of Morrow, City of Boardman and Morrow County, and they decide how the money is to be spent. The CREZ guidelines loosely stipulate that spending is to be on "impacted" districts, or those seeing the most increase for services as a

result of new businesses locating at the Port.

CREZ funds are collected from businesses locating in the Enterprise Zone, which pay the fees instead of property taxes. The zone is a recruitment tool to attract businesses and jobs to the Port of Morrow and so far has been very successful, expecting to collect at least \$22 million over the next 15 years.

So far this year the CREZ board has agreed

to give \$150,000 to Morrow County Education Foundation and another \$150,000 to a housing plan to entice new workers to live in Morrow County. The board will not be receiving any other funds until next year.

Mills said a concern of the other districts is the loss of coal-fired plant taxes, estimated to be \$3.5 million per year, that will be going off the rolls when the plant closes in 2020.

"This group of small

districts wishes to present to the enterprise board members a proposal for possible distribution of payment in lieu of taxes payments that the enterprise fund will receive in future years.

"The group recognizes that the (coal) plant will not go completely off the tax rolls immediately; however, it appears it will probably come off the rolls as soon as the owners can accomplish

—See CREZ FUND DISTRIBUTION/PAGE TEN

New towing business opens



Gary Walls shows off the truck for the new towing business, Martin's Towing. The business will offer 24/7 towing and, according to Walls, has been registered with the sheriff for towing calls. They will take all calls including flat tires, accidents, disabled vehicles and more. Walls will be operating the business for owner Sam Martin. The company's phone number is 541-571-4260. —Photo by David Sykes

G-T closed for Christmas, New Year's

Contributors, advertisers asked to note differing deadlines for those issues

The Gazette-Times will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 25 and Thursday, Dec. 26, for the Christmas holiday. Next week's edition of the Gazette-Times will be published on Tuesday, Dec. 24; the news and ad

deadline for that edition will be this Friday, Dec. 20, at 5 p.m. Normal business hours will resume Friday, Dec. 27.

The Gazette-Times will also be closed Wednesday, Jan. 1, for New Year's Day.

The news and ad deadline for the Dec. 31 edition will be Friday, Dec. 27 at 5 p.m. Normal business hours will resume Thursday, Jan. 2.

We wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

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